

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

treasure of the Church is the blood of Christ, given in ransom for the soul ; for the treasure of the blood is not paid for temporal substance, but for the salvation of the human race. So that, supposing that you are bound to conquer and preserve the treasure and the lordship of the cities that the Church has lost; much more are you bound to win back so many little sheep, who are a treasure in the Church. It is better to let the mire of temporal things go than the gold of spiritual things. Peace, peace, for the love of Christ crucified." What is the loss of the temporal power compared to the evil of seeing grace perish in men's souls, and the obedience die away that they owe the Pope ? How can he reform the Church while he remains at war, and squanders upon soldiers what belongs to the poor ? " You have need of the aid of Christ crucified ; set, then, your affection and your desire upon Him ; not on man and on human aid, but on Christ sweet Jesus, whose place you hold ; for it seems that He wishes the Church to return to her sweet primal state. O how blessed will your soul be and mine, when I see you begin this great good work, and when what God is now permitting by force shall be accomplished in your hands by love ¹ " i

As soon as Catherine got back to Siena, certain Florentines waited upon her—apparently on behalf of the Parte Guelfa— wishing to hear from her lips what she had done for them at Avignon, and what were the dispositions of the Pope. She answered that Gregory was ready to receive them into his grace, if they would give proof of their submission to the Holy See,

¹ *i. e.* the return of the Church to her primitive state of poverty and purity *by* the loss of her temporal possessions. Letter 209 (2), corrected by the Harleian MS., which states that this letter was sent to the Pope " poi che fu giunto a Roma," as is confirmed *by* internal evidence ; Gigli and Tommaseo are clearly in error in assigning it to an earlier date. The postscript in the MS. reads: " I believe that Fra Jacopo da Padova, the bearer of this letter, is a true and sweet servant of God ; I commend him to you, and beseech your Holiness to be pleased to see him and the others always near you." Fra Jacopo of Padua was an Olivetan monk, one of Catherine's correspondents, who was afterwards prior of San Bartolommeo outside Florence.